

Serial No.: 09/971,975

REMARKS

The instant amendment is being submitted responsive to the Office Action mailed 23 March 2004

CLAIM OBJECTIONS:

Claim 39 stands objected to in view of an indicated informality. Applicants have adopted the language suggested by the Examiner to overcome the objection. In view of this adoption, applicants respectfully submit that the objection to Claim 39 should now be obviated. Withdrawal of the objection is hereby requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS:

Claims 36, 38-41 and 43-47 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b). Applicants have cancelled claims 36, 41 and 47 thereby obviating the rejection of these claims.

In paragraph 3 of his Action, the Examiner indicated that Claim 37 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable provided that the claim were rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Responsive to the Examiner's indications, applicants have rewritten Claim 37 to include all of the limitations of its base claim (claim 36). There were no intervening claims previously extant between Claim 37 and its base claim, i.e. Claim 36. In view of the revision of Claim 37, that claim should now be allowable. Claims 38-40 have been amended to depend from Claim 37, as amended. In view of these amendments, applicants respectfully submit that claims 37-40 should now be allowable.

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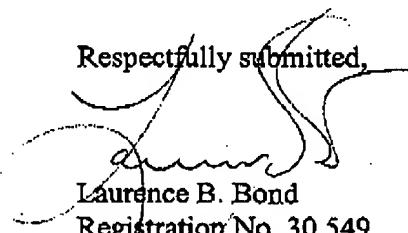
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In paragraph 3, the Examiner also indicated that Claim 42 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable provided that the claim were rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Responsive to the Examiner's indications, applicants have rewritten Claim 42 to include all of the limitations of its base claim (claim 41). In view of the revision of Claim 42, that claim should now be allowable. Claims 43-46 have been amended to depend from Claim 42, as amended. In view of these amendments, applicants respectfully submit that claims 42-46 should now be allowable.

CONCLUSION:

In view of the Amendments submitted herewith and the Remarks set forth above, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the instant application.

Respectfully submitted,


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